

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. By the present amendment, claim 1 has been amended. Claims 25 and 26 have been canceled. Claims 1-24 and 27 are pending in the application. Claim 27 is allowed.

As amended, claim 1 recites that the first and second side panels of the windshield curtain each have a periphery shaped to follow the contour of the instrument panel. The side panels shape the windshield curtain when inflated such that the center panel engages and follows an upper surface of the instrument panel and a front surface of the instrument panel. The center panel engages and follows these surfaces without the windshield being urged against the instrument panel by another object.

This structure is not taught or suggested in Haland et al. (US 6,722,691 B1) or Henseler et al. (US 5,205,583). Haland et al. does not discuss the shape or configuration of any panels used to construct the air bag. As shown clearly in Haland et al., the air bag, when inflated, does not touch the instrument panel and has a contour that is curved opposite the instrument panel. (See Fig. 3 and column 6, lines 11-19). As clearly set forth in Haland et al., the only circumstance in which the air bag engages the front and upper surfaces of the instrument panel is when the air bag is urged into contact with these surfaces as a result of an occupant impacting the air bag. In Henseler et al., the side panels of the air bag curve opposite the contour of the instrument panel and,

therefore, clearly do not shape the air bag such that the center panel follows an upper and front surface of the instrument panel.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that Haland et al. and Henseler et al. do not teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in claim 1. Therefore, the rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn and claim 1 should be allowed. Claims 2-24 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific limitations recited therein.

Regarding claim 2, neither Haland et al. nor Henseler et al. teach or suggest peripheries of the side panels having a first part shaped to follow a surface of the instrument panel presented generally toward an occupant of the vehicle and a second part shaped to follow an upper surface of the instrument panel presented toward the vehicle roof.

Regarding claim 13, neither Haland et al. nor Henseler et al. teach or suggest a windshield curtain including a first chamber inflatable along a front surface of the instrument panel presented generally toward the vehicle occupant and a second chamber inflatable along the windshield and an upper surface of the instrument panel adjacent the windshield.

Regarding claim 15, neither Haland et al. nor Henseler et al. teach or suggest side portions of the center panel having cutout portions that reduce the width of the center panel and helps form a tapered configuration of the windshield curtain.

Regarding claim 20, neither Haland et al. nor Henseler et al. teach or suggest side panels having a first portion shaped

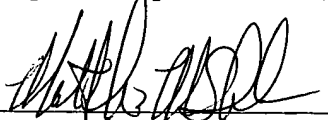
to extend along a surface of an instrument panel presented generally toward the vehicle occupant when the windshield curtain is inflated and a second portion that extends transverse to the first portion and is shaped to extend along an upper surface of the instrument panel when the windshield curtain is inflated.

Regarding claim 21, neither Haland et al. nor Henseler et al. teach or suggest that the center panel has a width measured perpendicular to its length and the side portions of the center panel each have a cutout portion that reduces the width of the center panel and thereby helps taper a width of the windshield curtain.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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